

18<sup>th</sup> September, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I hope all families are well at this time.

Our response to Covid-19 is a continuous process and is ever evolving. This week I would like to draw your attention to the following:

**Covid-19 Documents:** The aim of our Covid-19 Response Plan, which was circulated to all families in August and is available to view on the website, is to prevent Covid-19 from entering the school and reduce the spread of the virus if it does enter the school. In an effort to prepare for all possible eventualities, please see the attached **information which has been devised to help prepare our school community for what will happen in the event of a member of the school population testing positive for Covid-19**. All parents/guardians are asked to familiarize themselves with this important information please. It is also available to view on the website.

A **'Who is Responsible for What and When'** document has also been devised. This clearly outlines the responsibilities of each stakeholder in relation to Covid-19 and is attached here for your convenience. All parents/guardians are asked to familiarize themselves with this important information please. It is also available to view on the website.

**School Attendance:** The following is a reminder of when children **should not come to school**:

If your child is in one of the following categories, they **should not attend school** –

- Children who are generally unwell
- Children who are displaying **any symptom** of Covid-19 (a temperature of 38 degrees Celsius or higher, a new cough, loss or changed sense of taste or smell, shortness of breath)
- Children who have been diagnosed with Covid-19
- Children who have been in close contact with a person who has been diagnosed with Covid-19
- Children who have a suspected case of Covid-19 and the outcome of the test is pending
- Children who have been in contact with a person who has a suspected case of Covid-19 and the outcome of the test is pending
- Children with underlying health conditions who have been directed by a medical professional not to attend school
- Children who have returned home after travelling abroad (non-green list) and must self-isolate for a period of 14 days

While it is understood that parents have to work and childcare can be an issue, we are living in very different times. **There are no exceptions to the above list**. Parents need to be prepared and have a back-up plan ready should their daughter need to stay at home from school/ be collected from school. We can no longer use the line 'I'll send her in and see how she goes'. We all have to err on the side of caution. If in doubt you are advised to phone your GP. The phone-call is free and they will advise you of the best course of action to take. We all want our school community to remain healthy and well. To ensure this, we must cooperate and work together as a team.

**Homework:** Teachers will begin to assign homework on Monday, 28<sup>th</sup> September. As with everything we do your trust in our experience and professional expertise is most appreciated. It has been decided that children will be assigned oral/practical tasks and one item of written homework each day initially. This will be built upon over time. Teachers will be in contact via Aladdin Connect prior to 28<sup>th</sup>

September in relation to the type and mode of submission of homework the teacher will be using. If any parent/guardian has a query in relation to homework it should be directed to the relevant teacher via email.

**Online learning Platform:** We have begun preparations for all eventualities should a class(es) be requested to work remotely from home. We have chosen the digital platform Seesaw (You can read more about their strong privacy promises here: <https://web.seesaw.me/privacy>)

It is GDPR compliant and is an app that allows children to create, reflect and demonstrate learning. It allows teachers to upload tutorials; children to return work; teachers to mark/explain/correct work and listen to audios from children also. It does not require children to stay online while engaged in activities and is very user friendly. It is a fantastic avenue to allow parents/guardians view their children's work and progress. Children will see their personal work only.

We intend to use our time during September/October to familiarise the children and you the parents/guardians with the platform to ease any sudden transition, should it arise.

In advance of commencing our work with Seesaw a permission/consent notice will be sent to you via Aladdin Connect next week.

**School Expenses:** Sincere thanks to all the families who have paid school expenses (Section B) and book rental expenses. In fairness to all families we must insist that everybody pays please. Book rental books for this school year are due to be distributed to pupils on/before 28<sup>th</sup> September. Books will only be distributed to pupils who have paid book rental fees. Please email [office@stmarysncobh.com](mailto:office@stmarysncobh.com) if your daughter will not be partaking in the Book Rental Scheme this year.

Wishing you all a safe and happy week.

Le gach dea-ghuí,

Fiona O'Callaghan

Principal